

## **Items related to the Columbia Deal (July 15-23, 2025)**

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### **Our Additional Commitments to Combatting Antisemitism**

July 15, 2025

<https://president.columbia.edu/news/our-additional-commitments-combatting-antisemitism>

Dear members of the Columbia community,

In recent weeks, in anticipation of the fall semester, my focus has been on the work we can do to support a civil, tolerant, flourishing community at Columbia. A place where all feel welcome, where different viewpoints, different ideas, can be shared respectfully, and where, therefore, deep intellectual vibrancy is possible. Many efforts are underway, and you will be hearing more about all of them in the coming weeks.

Our work toward an agreement with the federal government has put a harsh spotlight on many of the difficult issues regarding discrimination and harassment we've seen on our campuses. The fact that we've faced pressure from the government does not make the problems on our campuses any less real; a significant part of our community has been deeply affected in negative ways. In my view, any government agreement we reach is only a starting point for change. Committing to reform on our own is a more powerful path. It will better enable us to recognize our shortcomings and create lasting change.

Today, I write to you, specifically, about our ongoing efforts to combat antisemitism. There is no place for intimidation, hateful language, or targeting of Jews or Israelis at Columbia, and we have zero tolerance for this behavior. Over the last year, guided by our principles of academic freedom, inclusion, and respect, and the important work of our Antisemitism Task Force, we have enacted meaningful reforms, understanding that more would be needed. After deep consultation with our Jewish community, and many friends and experts outside of our institution, we are taking some important additional steps.

### **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism**

As part of our March 21st commitments, Columbia announced we would incorporate the definition of antisemitism, as recommended by our Antisemitism Task Force in August 2024, into our anti-discrimination policies. We felt then, as we do now, that it is important to use a definition of antisemitism that reflects the experiences of many within Columbia's Jewish

community. Our Task Force had recommended that definition for use in education and pedagogy. While we remain committed to that carefully constructed definition, we are today also formally incorporating the IHRA definition of antisemitism into the work of our Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), housed under the Office of the Provost.

While OIE has operated in a manner consistent with applicable regulations and guidance from the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), including OCR's 2021 and 2024 guidance, the formal incorporation of this definition will strengthen our response to and our community's understanding of modern antisemitism. That guidance directs schools to consider the IHRA definition of antisemitism and its accompanying examples to the extent that any such examples might be useful as evidence of discriminatory intent. The IHRA definition is similarly used by many universities and colleges across the country.

Columbia is committed to taking all possible steps to combat antisemitism and the University remains dedicated to ensuring that complaints of discrimination and harassment of all types, including complaints based on Jewish and Israeli identity, are treated in the same manner. Formally adding the consideration of the IHRA definition into our existing anti-discrimination policies strengthens our approach to combating antisemitism.

### **Appoint Title VI and Title VII Coordinators**

Columbia will appoint Title VI and Title VII Coordinators to review and respond to allegations under University policies implementing the requirements of Title VI and Title VII, ensuring compliance with the laws' prohibition of discrimination, based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, as well as its prohibition on retaliation. The coordinators will be part of the OIE and will have both advising and enforcement responsibilities. We believe the addition of these positions will ensure swift attention and action on complaints about violations of these policies.

Additionally, these coordinators will contribute to a publicly available annual report to University leadership and the Board of Trustees, which will be part of a broader OIE annual report and will include reporting on Title VI and Title VII complaints, investigations, and outcomes. We hope this expanded annual report will give our community confidence that our systems addressing discrimination and harassment on our campuses are working.

### **Additional Training on Antisemitism**

In addition to the existing Title VI antidiscrimination training—which specifically addresses antisemitism and is required of all students, faculty, and staff—we believe that supporting a deeper education on antisemitism is critical. Over the last six months, after extraordinarily thoughtful and often painful conversations with leaders from our own Jewish community,

and nationally and internationally, it's become clear that ongoing educational work will be the most critical and consequential of all our efforts to combat antisemitism. Implementing meaningful educational programs that engage not only our students, but also our faculty and staff, will have the most lasting impact, and they will also take the most time and effort.

To begin, we are initiating programming and training partnerships with several national Jewish organizations including Project Shema, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, and Kalaniyot; we are also exploring a cooperation with Yad Vashem. We hope to engage our community, in many ways, in an ongoing dialogue on the roots of antisemitism and its modern forms. These partnerships are intended to bring our community together and foster a greater understanding of these issues using tools we value at Columbia—education and respectful conversation.

We are also collaborating with Interfaith America, the Constructive Dialogue Institute, and StoryCorps' One Small Step program to build programs that will go beyond traditional trainings, and the focus on antisemitism, to build bridges more broadly, to create constructive dialogue, and to deepen our understanding of each other.

### **Affirmation of Zero Tolerance**

I want to reiterate that the University has zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment based on protected traits, including Jewish and Israeli identity. And while our University Rules and Policies are well-defined on this matter, beginning this 2025-26 academic year, Columbia will make clear our “Zero Tolerance for Antisemitism and Hate” in regular community messages.

As part of this initiative, Columbia has not, and will not, recognize or meet with the group that calls itself “Columbia University Apartheid Divest” (CUAD), its representatives, or any of its affiliated organizations. Organizations that promote violence or encourage disruptions of our academic mission are not welcome on our campuses and the University will not engage with them.

I am so grateful to the many community members who have given so generously of their time to offer their deep concerns and constructive and critical ideas. I would also add that making these announcements in no way suggests we are finished with the work. In a recent discussion, a faculty member and I agreed that antisemitism at this institution has existed, perhaps less overtly, for a long while, and the work of dismantling it, especially through education and understanding, will take time. It will likely require more reform. But I'm hopeful that in doing this work, as we consider and even debate it, we will start to promote healing and to chart our path forward.

Sincerely,

Claire Shipman

Acting President, Columbia University in the City of New York

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### **Trustee Actions on University Judicial Board and Rules Process**

July 18, 2025

<https://secretary.columbia.edu/news/trustee-actions-university-judicial-board-and-rules-process>

On March 20, 2025, the Trustees approved changes to the University Judicial Board (UJB) process, including that such processes would be “situated within” the Office of the Provost. Those changes were announced to the University community on March 21, 2025. On May 7, 2025, the Trustees ratified their previous actions with respect to the UJB and rules process in a set of resolutions. Those resolutions were shared with the Senate Executive Committee on May 12, 2025 and referenced in the June 13, 2025 Senate Plenary materials.

Pursuant to those Trustee actions, the UJB and rules process were moved from the Senate and Rules Committee to the Office of the Provost. As a result of those changes, responsibility for oversight of the UJB, as well as the interpretation and modification of the rules, now resides in the Provost’s Office. These structural reforms are currently in place and have been followed with respect to UJB proceedings and the rules since they became effective on March 20.

A recent report issued by the Senate Rules Committee does not reflect the actions described above, and therefore clarification of these points for the community is essential.

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### **Issue #057: Parsing the Shipman Statement on Combatting Antisemitism**

Stand Columbia (Alumni group)

July 19, 2025

<https://standcolumbia.org/2025/07/19/issue-057-parsing-the-shipman-statement-on-combatting-antisemitism/>

Acting President Shipman deserves credit for breaking the silence with a public statement that acknowledges Columbia’s need for reform. While we disagree on how far this statement goes, we recognize the value of her stepping forward.

Our overall take is that the statement commits to a great deal of “stuff” that comes at effectively no cost (and not all of which was even asked for), but did not commit to much of the hard work for reform. Here is a breakdown.

## **“Incorporation” of the IHRA definition**

This seems to be a symbolic gesture, for which the actual impact is not clear.

To review: The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism is the most widely adopted global framework, embraced by dozens of countries and multiple U.S. federal agencies. Rival definitions, such as the Jerusalem Declaration, have been criticized for narrowing antisemitism down to only its most overt expressions.

In fact, in March Columbia committed to “incorporating” the Task Force on Antisemitism’s own definition of antisemitism, which already reflected IHRA principles. Now, the University says it is also “incorporating” (note carefully it does not say “adopting”) the IHRA definition into the Office of Institutional Equity’s enforcement work. But how this actually changes anything is unclear.

OIE has already been expected to operate in compliance with Department of Education Office of Civil Rights guidance, which has endorsed IHRA since 2019 (Trump Executive Order 13899), which was never revoked and in fact reaffirmed by Biden in 2023. We don’t understand what it means to “incorporate” IHRA into existing Title VI work in a way that changes decisions. Will OIE now say, “Well, we would have made X decision, but now we will make Y decision because IHRA is ‘incorporated’ into our work”?

Perhaps the thinking is that given the amount of overt, heavily documented antisemitism on Columbia’s campus, the symbolic gesture is itself meant to be meaningful. Time will tell.

## **Appointing Title VI and Title VII coordinators**

This is a meaningful, but incomplete move.

Columbia has been bound by Title VI (discrimination in federally funded programs) and Title VII (employment discrimination) for over half a century. It is difficult to imagine Columbia did not already have designated officials responsible for this work. So what does this actually mean?

The likeliest outcome is that Columbia is creating (or retitling) a titled position for duties that were already performed by someone without that title. That’s not necessarily a bad thing. Institutionalizing responsibility can improve accountability.

The promise of a publicly available annual report covering Title VI and VII complaints and outcomes is welcome, but is inadequate. For one thing, this is nothing new, as Columbia already publishes Title IX reports publicly. Moreover, this

commitment only covers Titles VI, VII, and IX. The Rules Administrator is not required to publish a report on aggregate outcomes of violations of the Rules of University Conduct, nor is CSSI required to publish a report on aggregate outcomes of Dean's Discipline. In this world, neither the Hamilton takeover nor the Butler invasion would have been included in this report.

Both the Task Force on Antisemitism and the Stand Columbia Society have repeatedly recommended comprehensive aggregate transparency of this kind. As Justice Hewart put it, "justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done."

### **Additional antisemitism training**

This is a positive step, as it addresses some of the key recommendations of the Task Force on Antisemitism. But, as with adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, it's not clear what it's meant to do.

The announcement name-checks several serious Jewish organizations (ADL, Yad Vashem, Project Shema, Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, Kalaniyot) as well as interfaith dialogue groups. Kalaniyot is especially worth investing in as a faculty-led platform for intellectual pluralism as it sponsors a diverse cohort of postdoctoral fellows and visiting faculty from Israeli academic institutions to Columbia. That's a decent lineup. The framing emphasizes education rather than indoctrination, which is good. But what exactly will the "training" cover? "Don't be antisemitic"?

There are broader initiatives. The Constructive Dialogue Institute (mentioned in the letter) has already been piloted at Harvard for a year. Embedding it into Columbia's new student orientation programs might have a modest, lasting effect, if it is done right.

If done well, this could work. If done poorly, it could come dangerously close to replicating the structure (and sometimes eye-rolling reception) of the "oppressor and oppressed" workshops of the last decade. For example, will it be an online training that you can fast-forward? Will it be a group session where you can zone out?

The proof will be in the pudding and the community should withhold judgment until the specific implementation of the training becomes clear.

### **Zero tolerance and not engaging with CUAD**

Good. But also... obvious.

Did anyone really think that, after the events of Spring 2024, Columbia would turn around and negotiate with CUAD?

This is like saying, after breaking up with someone, “I will not be going on a date with that person.”

It could also be easily circumvented by negotiating with particular individuals, not “CUAD the entity” (which—again—is anonymous so the University could negotiate with CUAD members and then plausibly deny any knowledge that it was negotiating with CUAD.)

CUAD has publicly stated they are “seek[ing] instruction” from and in coordination with foreign terrorist organizations, and that “violence is the only path forward.” They held a Zoom teach-in with a terrorist. They also glorify other mass murderers like Mao Zedong and held a memorial service to the terrorist Yahya Sinwar. The question is not whether Columbia should “engage” with them. The question is whether Columbia has, at minimum, quietly referred them to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, namely the FBI Counterterrorism Division (for promoting terrorism), the DOJ National Security Division’s Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Unit (for seeking instruction from foreign principals), and Treasury’s Office of Foreign Asset Control (for producing and distributing material—which costs money—from the “ Hamas Media Office”).

If it hasn’t, we hope those agencies are already investigating whether the threshold for “material support” has been breached. A refusal to negotiate with CUAD is not leadership. It’s obvious.

The statement also says that “Columbia has not, and will not, recognize or meet with [CUAD], its representatives, or any of its affiliated organizations.”

Last we checked, CUAD is a “coalition” of over 100 affiliated organizations, including a mariachi band, a gardening club, several dance clubs, and a poetry club. Taken literally, this means that Columbia should withdraw recognition (and funding) until they have publicly disavowed their status of an affiliated organization of CUAD. As an example, Columbia Raas, a South Asian dance troupe, is the 10th highest funded undergraduate student organization and a member of CUAD. Curiously, one of the CUAD’s affiliated organizations is Student Workers of Columbia, the local graduate student union. Again, taken literally, this means Columbia has committed that it “will not recognize” the union until it disavows its affiliation with CUAD.

One way to resolve this is to give these organizations a deadline, say September 1, 2025 to publicly disavow any affiliation with CUAD or have their funding removed. If the clubs don’t want to do that, then the University could wait until, say, May 2027 (when the last of the members who agreed to affiliate with CUAD in 2023 would cycle out) to restore recognition. Another, gentler way, is negative consent: the University could send club and union leaders emails that say “we are assuming you are no longer affiliated with CUAD as affiliation means derecognition and loss of funding; if you remain affiliated, please advise by September 1.” It would be very interesting to see if this actually happens (we suspect not)—but again, all we are doing here is taking this statement literally at its word.

Finally, one should also note that University Statute § 385 states “the name of the University may not be used by any

student or any group or organization of which a student is a member, without the approval of the Trustees or that of the President acting by authority of the Trustees.” If the President has not given CUAD the approval to use the name “Columbia University” (which this statement on non-recognition suggests she has not), the University has clear grounds to take legal action to compel them to stop.

At a minimum, the administration should use litigation tools like discovery to unmask CUAD’s anonymous principals, which would allow Columbia to know if it was “negotiating” with them.

(And before you ask, the Stand Columbia Society is not using Columbia University’s name. It is using the name of the song “Stand Columbia”, which has long been out of copyright.)

The analysis above is intentionally provocative, even “pokey”. To be clear, we applaud the move, which suggests the administration is listening, both to the Task Force on Antisemitism and to the many voices calling for greater accountability and meaningful reform. But the University’s enforcement posture (does it follow through on its stated commitment to derecognize over 100 CUAD affiliates including a mariachi band, a dance club, and the union?) should be clarified. We hope it reflects the beginning of a deeper institutional shift.

#### **Addendum: the University Senate no longer has decision rights over promulgating and enforcing rules**

Though not part of the Shipman announcement, the Trustees released a rather extraordinary statement around the same time, which you can find [in the item above]. It says two new things.

First, the March 21 letter suggested that Rules “enforcement” was moved out of the University Senate. The Trustee resolution stated that Rules “process” was moved out as well. Finally, the statement confirms that Rules “process” includes “interpretation” and “modification.” This means that the University Senate has no further decision rights with respect to the Rules of University Conduct (enforcement rights via appointment power of the Rules Clerk and to the University Judicial Board has been removed from the Executive Committee, and formation rights have been removed from the Rules Committee), and is now advisory only.

Second, the Trustees specifically corrected Senate-originated misinformation: “a recent report issued by the Senate Rules Committee does not reflect the actions described above, and therefore clarification of these points for the community is essential.”

These moves are welcome, long-overdue, and well-deserved due to the University Senate leadership’s role at putting our beloved institution at risk by attempting to slow-walk, obstruct, and dilute discipline for setting up encampments and taking over buildings. Perhaps one day, a reformed Senate can return to its role of offering a constructive and productive channel for shared governance, as Mike Sovern envisioned and as it did in the past. We look forward to that day. But for



now, this is meaningful, structural, and real change. Well done to all.

### **So is this part of the deal?**

On its surface, this announcement reads as a restatement of positions already taken, or obvious steps long overdue. It is not what reform-minded faculty, students, or alumni have asked for.

But viewed charitably, it may be part of a broader process. Most people think of a “deal” as a final, signed agreement. History teaches that in politically sensitive areas, a “deal” is a process, a sequence of actions that demonstrate commitment to follow-through.

In the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger pioneered “shuttle” diplomacy as he “shuttled” between Aswan, Jerusalem, and Damascus. As the late U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk (a former visiting professor at Columbia’s Middle East Institute) has chronicled, Kissinger would haggle over minutiae such as whether Assad would withdraw two tanks by 100 meters in exchange for Golda Meir moving back one tank and an artillery battery by 50 meters. The details were never written into the final cease fire agreement, but they directly made it possible.

Similarly, to end the Cuban Missile Crisis, the U.S. agreed to quietly and “voluntarily” remove obsolete Jupiter missiles from Turkey as a stabilizing gesture. The deal was sealed with conditions: six months’ delay, no publicity, and no explicit linkage to the Soviet withdrawal from Cuba. These kinds of pre-agreed but unpublished measures are known in diplomacy as confidence-building measures: concrete steps taken to calm a volatile situation, establish credibility, and make agreement possible.

The same logic may apply here. Like Kissinger’s incremental diplomacy, in a best-case scenario, this announcement may contain “unrelated” gestures that—with some nudging—come together to form a negotiated path toward institutional peace.

Talk is cheap, but action accumulates. Deal or no deal, Columbia Renewed will not happen until further reforms—which Acting President Shipman, to her credit, has acknowledged Columbia “will likely require”—are enacted and sustained.

We recognize that structural reform within a complex entity, especially one navigating federal scrutiny, internal divisions, and leadership transition, is not achieved overnight. So cautious, piecemeal rollouts are to be expected. One would expect that funding should be restored on a reciprocal basis, i.e. step-by-step as Columbia makes concrete, measurable, externally observable, and irreversible progress on its commitments.

But as of now, there is no deal, only conflicting reports on the current potentially impending deal, and conflicting interpretations of what the finish line looks like. We will continue to evaluate actions, not announcements. But we welcome any steps, however modest, that move Columbia toward the kind of transparency, accountability, and reform its

community—and America—deserves. Stay tuned.

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## **Resolution of Federal Investigations and Restoration of the University's Research Funding**

July 23, 2025

<https://president.columbia.edu/news/resolution-federal-investigations-and-restoration-universitys-research-funding>

Dear members of the Columbia community,

Columbia University has finalized an agreement with the federal government, ending a period of considerable institutional uncertainty. This agreement resolves multiple federal agency investigations and protects Columbia's academic mission, research enterprise, and independence. The resolution will allow the University to move forward with clarity and focus—returning our full attention to the work of teaching, discovery, and public service. It will also enable all of us to turn our attention to mending and rebuilding our community.

With the agreement, our access to billions of dollars in federal research funding will resume. Terminated grants will be reinstated and our faculty will become eligible again for future grants, as well as continuations of existing grants. Not only will this resolution restore Columbia's ability to fully participate in its longstanding federal research partnerships, but it also will ensure critical continuity for faculty, students, and staff across every discipline—many of whom have seen years, even decades, of progress toward medical and scientific discoveries placed at risk. I've received an outpouring of relief from our scientists in recent days as they started to learn that restored grant funding will allow their vital work to continue.

Critically, Columbia retains control over its academic and operational decisions. As set forth in the agreement: "No provision of this agreement, individually or taken together, shall be construed as giving the United States authority to dictate faculty hiring, university hiring, admissions decisions, or the content of academic speech." This was our north star, and we did not waver from it. Columbia's governance remains in our control. The federal government will not dictate what we teach, who teaches, or which students we admit.

As part of the agreement, Columbia will pay a \$200 million settlement to the federal government over three years, and \$21 million to settle investigations involving the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I recognize these are substantial settlements. As Acting President, together with our Board of Trustees, we had to look at all the facts. We have seen not only \$400 million in federal grants frozen, but also the majority of our \$1.3 billion a year in federal funding placed on hold. The prospect of that continuing indefinitely, along with the potential loss of top scientists, would jeopardize our status as a world-leading research institution.

Furthermore, as I have discussed on many occasions with our community, we carefully explored all options open to us. We might have achieved short-term litigation victories, but not without incurring deeper long-term damage—the likely loss of

future federal funding, the possibility of losing accreditation, and the potential revocation of visa status of thousands of international students.

As part of the settlement, the University has not admitted wrongdoing and does not agree with the government's conclusion that it violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. We are not, however, denying the very serious and painful challenges our institution has faced with antisemitism. For these reasons, we took several important corrective steps in March, many of which are in this agreement, including a new provision for a liaison to the Jewish community, situated in University Life.

Our commitment to creating a safe, respectful community must extend well beyond any agreement with the government. I announced additional measures to combat antisemitism last week. We know there is still more to do. We will work on multiple fronts to combat all forms of hatred and intolerance at Columbia, and you will see more efforts to that end in the coming months.

The success of the agreement requires that both parties honor it, and commit to the processes laid out in the event of disputes. To that end, we have agreed on a robust dispute resolution process that includes a mutually agreed upon independent monitor and arbitrator as neutral third parties, rather than ceding authority to the government or a court. The process requires that the government go through a very specific, prescribed set of steps if it believes we are not meeting the terms of the agreement. If the parties can't agree, the matter goes to the arbitrator, and then, as needed, to court. The agreement allows us to hold the government to that process with respect to any concerns about compliance. This predictable structure is far preferable, in our view, to piecemeal scrutiny, and will allow us to focus on long-term progress for our institution.

Certain terms of this settlement pertain to admissions and hiring and are wholly consistent with existing federal anti-discrimination laws, which our institution has always followed, and will always follow. That language was carefully drafted; we have agreed to provide data to which the government is entitled, and is currently requesting from scores of institutions, including ours. In several instances, the agreement codifies other practices or policies already in existence, or reviews already underway. We must always comply with government regulations regarding the international student visa program, for example.

For months, Columbia's discussions with the federal government have been set up as a test of principle—a binary fight between courage and capitulation. But like most things in life, the reality is far more complex. We established our non-negotiable academic and institutional boundaries clearly, and we chose to talk and to listen. We certainly did not always agree with the government's proposals, nor they with ours. It is important for the community to know that a broad academic leadership team worked with me closely, as well as with our Board of Trustees, to achieve this resolution. I consulted widely outside of the institution as well. In the end, we have arrived at a carefully crafted agreement that protects our institution and our values, and that will allow us to move forward, with strength, resuming the vital work we do in service to the nation and to humanity.

Countless faculty members and administrators have already been doing the nearly impossible, often invisible work, under

enormous pressure, of safeguarding Columbia's future. They've confronted the real hardship caused by the loss of federal funding to our research enterprise, borne witness to the painful divides that have opened in our community, and labored to find constructive solutions to all of it. For this wisdom and dedication, I am grateful. It is the best of Columbia on display.

My hope is that the Columbia University community is ready to reset, to focus again on academic rigor and respectful debate, and to use this moment of challenge as a chance to imagine and build a stronger institution than ever. I am committed to that process.

We understand that members of our community will hold different views about this decision. We made it with care, with seriousness, and with an unwavering commitment to the mission, values, and future of Columbia University.

Sincerely,

Claire Shipman

Acting President, Columbia University in the City of New York

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